NOTES FROM DR. EDWARD MONTROSE SHARPE, LACOMBE.

Born April 19th, 1862; graduated from McGill Medical College, April 5th, 1894; came to Wetaskiwin May of 1894. That year the country around Wetaskiwin had a very late summer frost which killed practically all the crops. Dr. Sharpe set himself up a medical practise at Wetaskiwin but because the people were all too poor he couldn't make a living there. Things were much worse the next year, 1895, because that year they had a very bad drought. Dr. Sharpe said that at the end of 1895 he was starving to death along with the rest of the people around there. There was a Doctor Richardson practising in Lacombe who had been offered the job of looking after the mine runners at Canmore. Dr. Richardson was no sure he wanted to go to Canmore and thought Dr. Sharpe might like to go and asked him to wire Dr. Brett at Banff. Sharpe wired Brett that he was interested but by that time Richardson had made up his mind that he wanted to go to Canmore himself and asked Dr. Sharpe is he would take over his practice at Lacombe. Dr. Sharpe wired back that he would so he went to Lacombe, December 5th, 1896, and became the second doctor there.

He furnished a little shack with a table and one chair. Most of the money he got that first year was in barter but he received enough from the sale of his barter to buy his food and pay whatever other bills he had and in September 1897 had enough money ahead to send for a girl from the East whom he married.

There was, at that time, a postmaster at Lacombe named Dalmage who was very much against having any foreigners settling around Lacombe. He got the train schedules of foreigners coming through on the C. and E. railroad and if any of them stopped at Lacombe he would tell them that there were many people of their own nationality living at Wetaskiwin which, according to Dr. Sharpe, explains why so many foreign people settled in the Wetaskiwin district. On the other hand, if any English speaking settlers arrived at Lacombe he would do everything he could to persuade them to stay there.

In reminiscing about his early medical experience at Wetaskiwin Dr. Sharpe remembered that the people believed they didn't need a doctor to officiate at the birth of a child. Most of the people in need of a doctor for such purposes relied on the services of a Norwegian woman in the neighborhood. A Frenchman once came to Dr. Sharpe and told him that he would give him ten dollars in cash if he would safely deliver his wife's forthcoming baby. The Frenchman came to Dr. Sharpe a day or two before the baby was to arrive and Dr. Sharpe arranged to go out the next day to see the woman. When he went to the place the next day he found that the baby had already arrived and that the Norwegian midwife had officiated at the birth. Dr. Sharpe believed that the Frenchman owed him ten dollars but when he told the Frenchman this the Frehchman claimed that he had promised the doctor the ten dollars if he were needed.

Dr. Sharpe says that the schedule on the C. and E. Railway in 1896 was as follows:

Monday: The train ran north, Calgary to Edmonton.

Tuesday: South, Edmonton to Calgary.

Wednesday: Calgary to MacLeod and back.

Thursday: Calgary to Edmonton.

Friday: Edmonton to Calgary.

Saturday: Calgary to MacLeod and back.

Dr. Sharpe recounted the following stories:

Frank Oliver, he says, was known far and wide as a master of strong language and his wife sometimes deplored this character trait in her husband. When Mr. Oliver was elected to parliament in 1896 she accompanied him to Ottawa. Mr. Oliver was somewhat ashamed of the clothes his wife took with her to Ottawa and persuaded Mrs. Oliver to go into a Ladies' furnishing store with him to get some new clothes. Mrs. Oliver has accompanied Frank on his own clothes-buying expeditions and she thought this was a good chance to teach him a lesson. The clerk brought out a dress and Mrs. Oliver expressed her disapproval by throwing at the clerk every cuss word she ever had heard her husband use. Frank was very embarrassed and, according to Dr. Sharpe, never swore at a clerk in his wife's presence again.

Dr. Sharpe recalled that Thos. D. Cochrane was a very poor public speaker and that on his campaign when he was running for the parliament in 1896 Mr. Cochrane

was accompanied by Hugh John Macdonald, the son of Sir John A. Macdonald, and that Macdonald was a very fine public speaker. He says that the usual procedure they followed when they went into a town was that Mr. Macdonald would make the address, usually a very fine one, and after he finished Cochrane would be called on to speak. Sharpe says that Cochrane would get up and say: "Ladies and Gentlemen, those are my sentiments too.",and sit down again.

Dr. Brett and Arthur Sifton were travelling together at one time and speaking against each other--Sifton for the government and Brett against it. At one time Sifton spoke first to a meeting and after he had finished Brett had disappeared. Sifton, therefore, continued to the audience: "Ladies and Gentlemen, you have heard my story; since Dr. Brett is not here, if you will permit me to do so, I will give his side of the question, too, just as he would give it to you". He, therefore, proceeded to give the identical address that Brett had been accustomed to giving and duplicated exactly all Brett's customary mannerisms. When he had finished Dr. Brett arrived and proceeded to begin the same speech. The audience was so convulsed with laughter that he didn't get very far and the doctor said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, you seem to be much amused and I'll be damned if I can see a single thing to laugh at".

Dr. Sharpe told the following story about a man from Ponoka. He says that there was a man named Williams living in Ponoka and that Williams one time attended a meeting at Regina at which all the members attending the meeting were asked to give their names and addresses. When Williams told the meeting that he was from Ponoka a fellow began to laugh and implied that Williams was crazy. Williams went back to Ponoka where during the course of the following year he thought of the exact answer he should have made and when he went to Regina the following summer the meeting again assembled and the members were asked to give their names and addresses. Williams said he was from Ponoka, Alberta, and the same man again implied that all Ponoka people were crazy. This is the answer that Williams gave: "Gentlemen, Ponoka is the only town in Alberta where a man has to prove himself sane before they will let him out".

Dr. Sharpe says that Bob Edwards was acting as bar-tender at Boise's Hotel in Wetaskiwin in 1896. He says that Bob was noted even then as a drunkard but that Bob's brother who was ranching in the district could out-do him any day in the week.

Dr. Sharpe says that the one thing Lacombe coveted more than anything else was the establishment of the provincial agricultural college at Lacombe. Unfortunately, Duncan Marshall was the member for Olds and that is how the school came to be at Olds instead of Lacombe.

Peter Talbot was the first teacher at Lacombe and the Merchants' Bank of Canada was the first bank. The bank

occupied one of the school rooms for a time. Dr. Sharpe explained that when the bank built their building they built it three-cornered. He says that the town was very carelessly laid out and that some of it was laid square to the railroad and the rest of it was laid square to the Main street.

In commenting on the name of Wetaskiwin which means "Hills of Peace" Dr. Sharpe said that when he went to Wetaskiwin it was about as far from being a peaceful spot as anywhere he had ever been.

The hospital in Lacombe began in 1905 when a Mrs. Trotter started a private hospital in her house. Red Deer had the first established hospital between Calgary and Edmonton.